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4 Newbury St., Boston,

COPY

July 11. 1917.

My dear Helen:

Your fine letter made me happy, as you knew it would. I have long felt futilely inconsistent when I tried to think clearly about the world war, to get above the conflict and see it with some degree of serenity and wisdom, and when at the same time my soul was confused and my intelligence was rendered inoperative by individual rancors. Now we can think in peace and perhaps to some purpose. I shall be here all summer at work with Koren on a book to be called "The War for Democracy", meaning the real war for real democracy. The Century Company is provisionally interested in it. Keep this under your bonnet, for it is wiser not to talk about it until it is done; I have a superstition that the more you talk about a plan, except to those that are working on it, the less likely it is to be realized. The only thing now worth doing, or the thing most worth doing, is to save what we can of democracy and internationalism from disaster which grows ever deeper and gives no present promise of cessation or even of mitigation. And the only medium of expression seems to be the printed book. The periodicals are closed to us or are shut down by the autocracy at Washington; of course you have heard that a number of publications, the Masses, the Appeal, and the rest have been barred from the mails.

I wonder if your motor may bring you by chance to some pleasant ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ town in Massachusetts, or anywhere near enough for me to run out and see you.

I have just finished unpacking the books and getting them on the shelves in a simulation of order. I began to hate everybody who had inflicted a book on the world(except you and me).

Do you know whether any steps have been taken by Miss Holt and her associates, or some department of the Red Cross, or anybody else, to prepare for the care and teaching of blinded American soldiers? The terrible need may never come but it is well to be ready for it. I know where there is some money in trust to be used for some kind of war relief; one of the conditions is that it shall be used in America. I think I can deflect some of it to the purpose I suggest, if there is to be an American counterpart of the British-French-Belgian-Blind-Soldiers' Relief. But of course I am not sure; you ain't sure of nuffin until you git it, and even then somebody may take it away from you. But I told the trustees I would make inquiries.

I enclose a request, which you had better get Miss Polly to answer, subject to Doubleday's approval. I suppose it is all right to grant the petitioner annexation without indemnity.

Get them to read you Bertrand Russell's article in the July Atlantic. It will set your wheels turning in the right direction. No doubt yours do turn in the right direction, but they may stick (mine do) and this piece will grease them.

Yours ever affectionately,

John